

## TOWN HALL – A LAFAYETTE TREASURE

**A**t the turn of the last century, the agricultural hamlet of Lafayette began to grow, and the Lafayette Improvement Club (LIC) was formed in 1911 to address the needs of the swelling population. The completion of the “old” tunnel (as in Old Tunnel Road) meant more development, as did the inauguration of passenger service by the Sacramento Northern Railroad in 1913.

One of the first issues the LIC addressed was the construction of a Town Hall to be used for community meetings and social events. The building immediately became an important cultural center for the community. Today, a revitalized Town Hall is rediscovering its roots as the center of Lafayette’s cultural life, with a full calendar of events year-round.

### Community Spirit Built Town Hall

In 1913, Frank and Rosa Ghiglione deeded the property on School St. at Moraga Rd. to the LIC. They also donated \$200 towards building costs, which along with other contributions and labor supplied by Lafayette citizens, resulted in the Town Hall’s completion in 1914. Over the years, Town Hall has been used by many organizations in many ways, including community meetings, church services, movies, and basketball. Throughout the early 1940s, use of the building was devoted to the war effort.

The Lafayette Improvement Association (LIA), formerly the LIC, has worked tirelessly to maintain Town Hall as a center of the community. In continuous use for almost a century, and designated a place of historical interest in 1978, the building’s main function for the past 50 years has been to serve as home to the Town Hall Theatre Company. Recently, Town Hall has undergone major renovations, including the addition of air conditioning, new seating for 200 people, and an attractive lobby area with a full bar.

### The Town Hall Theatre Company

The oldest continuously active live theater in Contra Costa County, it was established in 1944 as The Dramateurs, and currently offers:

- a full season of five adult productions,
- low subscription rates with benefits from local merchants,
- a complete Costume Gallery stocked with rentals year-round.

Town Hall has recently begun to add breadth and depth to its schedule of events, including:

- **Artz 4 Kidz**, a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering and encouraging the development of children’s theatre. Over the past three years the group has worked with hundreds of children and teens at Town Hall, offering drama classes, summer camps, and fully staged productions open to children of all ages.



Nicholas Bayhi (L) and Adam VanDer Kerchove rehearse “Sci-Fi Spoof” as part of the Artz 4 Kidz program staged at the Town Hall.



- The **Gold Coast Chamber Players**, a classical music ensemble established in 1987. As a means of enhancing and personalizing the chamber music concert experience, the Players discuss the music during their performances and meet with the audience afterwards for conversation and refreshments. In addition to their initial Town Hall concert series this spring, the Players have also established innovative programs in Lafayette’s schools.

- Creative Musical Alternatives, which just concluded Lafayette’s first **Summer Music Series**. The series played to sold-out audiences on four Saturdays in July. Headliners included Don Neely and the Royal Society Jazz Orchestra, Norton Buffalo and the Knockouts, Golden Bough and the McGrath Irish Dancers, and Mano Y Mano and Pasion.

### 2000-2001 Season

During the upcoming season, the Town Hall Theatre Company will present productions of *Crossing Delancey* by Susan Sandler, *The Children’s Hour* by Lillian Hellman, *Fools* by Neil Simon, and more. For more information, and for information about all the activities taking place at Town Hall, call the Theatre Company at 283-1557, or check their web site at <http://townhalltheatre.hypemart.net>.

### Exploring Expansion Options

Town Hall has only limited rehearsal and storage space, which restricts the number of performances that can be presented each year. To increase Town Hall’s utility as the center of Lafayette’s cultural activities, the LIA has begun to explore the possibility of raising funds to expand the building. We’ll keep you informed about their plans and efforts.

# STATE AWARDS \$1.3 MILLION FOR PARKS IMPROVEMENTS

**T**he south end of the 68-acre Lafayette Community Park, on St. Mary's Rd. in Burton Valley, with some of the most beautiful ball fields in Contra Costa County, is heavily used. But the north section, comprised of the Las Trampas and Grizzly Creek areas, is relatively inaccessible. That's about to change, though, due to State funds recently captured by the City.

In July, Lafayette received word that the State will provide nearly \$300,000 for the construction of a pedestrian bridge from the Community Center parking lot across Las Trampas Creek to the spacious oak woodland in the northern portion of the Community Park. Presently, access to the area requires a long walk along the length of the park from the southern section.

The City also won \$1 million in State funds to make improvements to the ball fields at 711 St. Mary's Rd. In addition to upgrading the two existing fields, plans call for creating a brand new soccer field. The improvements, described in the approved 1991 Master Plan, should be completed over the next two years.



## Other Park Improvements

- The City Council recently allocated \$220,000 in park development fees for the construction of a group picnic area at the south end of the Community Park. Upgrades will include the installation of a new pathway, barbecues, and a refurbished lawn area, and should be completed this fall.

- In late August, the City Council approved a master plan for the development of Leigh Creekside Park. The City's newest neighborhood park, located at the corner of 4th St. and Moraga Blvd., will be landscaped with natural paths and native plants. The existing fence will be replaced, and a new safety fence will be erected along the creek's steep banks. A drinking fountain, benches and picnic tables will be included in the upgrade. The project should be completed next spring.

- The City Council also recently agreed to donate up to \$80,000 to the Town of Moraga for the construction of a \$240,000 skate- and bike-park at Moraga Commons. The Council stipulated that the money would only be awarded if Moraga and Orinda each raised similar amounts. If you'd like to contribute to the skate- and bike-park, please call 284-1968.

## FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

**T**he City Council has approved a 5-Year Capital Improvement Program. The plan will complete the final seven Road & Drain Bond Measure projects: improvements to Acalanes Road, El Curtola Blvd., Happy Valley Road, streets in the North Thompson and Hampton Road neighborhoods, Sibert Court, Sweet Road and Doreen Way, and Perales Street. The new plan also addresses storm drain concerns, installation of walkways and implementation of park improvements.

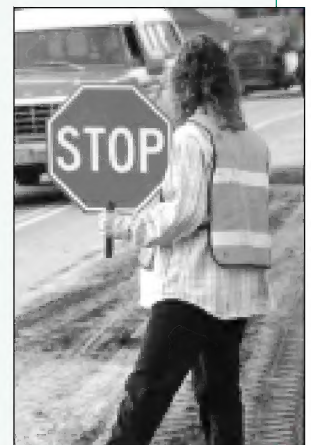


Although many of Lafayette's major streets have recently been resurfaced, the 5-year Capital Improvement Program suggests that an immediate investment of \$17 million would be required to restore all public streets to defect-free condition. The plan

also estimates that a \$4.5 million annual pavement budget is necessary to maintain Lafayette's streets in defect-free condition.

Since these figures are far above what the City can afford, City Council members have approved a scaled-back proposal. They adopted a 5-year, \$13 million Pavement Management Program that will maintain - but not improve - the overall quality of streets in Lafayette. The plan calls for work on 77 streets over 5 years, but recognizes that many smaller cul-de-sacs and less trafficked streets will not receive treatment, despite their already poor condition. The City Council has pledged to monitor the situation and work with the community to solve the long-term funding situation.

As approved, the 5-year program suggests that the City will experience a funding shortfall of \$5 million in its final two years. The City Council is considering a number of options to address the issue and is also investigating ways to obtain additional funding. Unless the City receives significant State or Federal funding, it may ask local voters to consider a second Road and Drain bond measure in 2003 or 2004.



# Draft General Plan Goes to City Council

Twelve Lafayette citizens have been working diligently for a long, long time (eight years!) to update the City's General Plan, which coordinates all the major components of the City's physical development.

Lafayette's first General Plan was adopted in 1974. It has served the City well, and the updated General Plan will echo many of the same themes such as: preserving residential neighborhoods, scenic ridgelines and hillsides. Other fundamental goals include:

- maintaining Lafayette's semi-rural character
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas
- enhancing downtown as the City's center for business, civic and cultural activities
- providing housing opportunities
- establishing and maintaining a network of trails and pedestrian paths
- balancing future growth with infrastructure

The updated General Plan will continue to celebrate the singular charm and value of Lafayette in an otherwise urbanized county. Careful implementation of its goals and policies will allow Lafayette to remain a semi-rural community, whose vibrant downtown and pastoral neighborhoods are set within a magnificent open space environment.

## The General Plan Process

Every city and county in California is required by State law to have a General Plan. Ongoing public participation over the past eight years has ensured that Lafayette's revised General Plan will reflect the views and concerns of the community. Key milestones in the process include:

- formation of the General Plan Advisory Committee, comprised of members of city commissions, the general public and elected representatives
- creation and distribution of a leaflet about the General Plan revision process, including a summary of plan alternatives, to all Lafayette residents and business people
- a series of Town Hall meetings to discuss the pros and cons of the plan alternatives
- review of the Draft General Plan by City Commissions
- public workshops held by the Planning Commission and City Council
- public hearings held to certify the Environmental Impact Report

Several public hearings have already been held to discuss the updated General Plan, yet more are planned. All are invited to attend. Please call Greg Wolff at 284-1976 for dates and times.

The ultimate result of the general plan process will be a vision statement for Lafayette's future that reflects the concerns and values of residents and business people. The new General Plan will seek a balance among the environmental, social and economic needs of the community through the application of residential design guidelines, control of hillside densities, and the careful review of the environmental and visual impacts of development.

## AROUND TOWN

**Oct. 14 FREE HOME COMPOSTING WORKSHOP** - Reduce your garbage by one-third or more, and spend less than 15 minutes a week doing it! Learn how at Orchard Nursery. Call 906-1806 to reserve your spot.

**Oct. 14 COMMUNITY RUMMAGE SALE** - You'll find lots of great bargains at this sale sponsored by the Lafayette Juniors. Proceeds benefit programs that serve local children and families. 7:00 am - 3:00 pm, Stanley Intermediate School. Call 930-7628 for information.

**Oct. 17 ATTN: LAFAYETTE NON-PROFITS** - Learn how to partner with the Lafayette Community Foundation to achieve your goals. Join Foundation members for this strategic discussion about partnering opportunities and available grants. 7:00 pm, Sequoia Room, Lafayette Community Center. Call Gwenn Lennox at 284-3228 for info.

**Oct. 21 GOLD COAST CHAMBER PLAYERS** - "Fantasies from Centuries Past," featuring works for oboe, strings and piano. First of four concerts in 2000/2001 series at Town Hall Theater. For info on series call 283-3728. For tickets, call the Town Hall box office at 283-1557.

**Oct. 29 LAFAYETTE RESERVOIR RUN** - Run wild around the beautiful reservoir and through the streets of Lafayette, all to benefit Lafayette schools. 7:00 am registration, 8:00 am start. Call 284-7404 for info or to register.

**Nov. 2 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR DINNER** - Come honor Lafayette's leading light! 6:15pm, Lafayette Park Hotel. Call 284-7404 for information.

**Nov. 17 THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY BREAKFAST** - Join a hundred of your neighbors to celebrate all that is good in our community. This is always a wonderful event! Call 284-7404 for location and reservations.

**Dec. 1 HOSPICE TREE LIGHTING** - Lafayette Circle at Mt. Diablo Blvd., near Roundup Saloon. 6 - 7 pm.

**Everyday CONSIDER CARPOOLING** - RIDES for Bay Area Commuters can match you up with others who work and live near you. Drivers can earn \$1,000 per year. Need info? Call 1-888-833-4499.

**NEWCOMERS WELCOME!** - The purpose of the Lafayette Newcomers Club is to welcome new residents to our community. Primarily a social organization, Newcomers' activities range from coffees, dinners and outdoor recreation to a book club and toddler playtimes. The Club is a non-profit organization and membership is open to anyone in Lafayette. Call 974-9360 for information.

**GOT ANTS?** - Keep them away the less-toxic way. Move trash away from your home, plug up holes and cracks so ants can't get in, and bring out the bait stakes if you must. For more information call 1-888-Bay-Wise.

**GRASSCYCLE!** - Take the next step to reduce yard waste by "Grasscycling," the natural recycling of grass by leaving clippings on the lawn when mowing. Clippings decompose quickly, returning nutrients and moisture to the soil. For more information, call 925-906-1806.

# MORE LAFAYETTE SECRETS

**T**he response to our request in the last Vistas for more "secrets" that make Lafayette truly special was impressive. Insiders provided information about additional Lafayette traditions or institutions that didn't appear in the summer issue. From the oldest to the newest:

- The **Wayside Inn Thrift Shop**, located in one of the oldest buildings in Lafayette, is the main fundraiser supporting the Assistance League's community projects benefiting in-need and at-risk adults and children in Contra Costa County. In addition to selling donated items, the Assistance League has more than 1,000 costumes available for rent.
- The **Lafayette Escadrilles Square Dancing Club**, which began in 1950, meets every Monday evening at Lafayette's Veterans' Hall. The group isn't for beginners, but is part of a larger association that regularly hosts classes of different levels, workshops and other square dancing events.
- The **Lafayette Senior Recreation Center** was organized 40 years ago. Today, it's a very active group of seniors who socialize at the Lafayette Methodist Church every Thursday. In addition to weekly socials, the club organizes day trips, cruises and other activities.
- Established in 1965, the **Lafayette Book Store** is one of the few independent booksellers around. Along with the **Storyteller**, an independent children's bookstore that has been part of the community for 15 years, it has played an important role in the educational and cultural life of the community. Both shops provide assistance to local schools through teacher nights and student field trips. The Lafayette Book Store hosts 4 book clubs and provides discounts to members of more than 90 registered local book clubs.
- Did you know that there is a Sufi school in Lafayette? The **Meher Schools**, and its **White Pony School** division, have offered programs for children two years old through fifth grade since 1975. The fully accredited and highly regarded school is associated with Sufism Reoriented, whose members focus on fully developing human gifts and abilities and offering them in service to the world.
- **Henson's Arabian Center**, has been providing safe, informative, and enjoyable riding lessons for kids ages 7 and up year-round since 1981. More recently, the facility has begun hosting birthday parties featuring handler-assisted pony rides, arts and crafts activities and more.
- **HCH**, an Institute for Hypnotherapy and Psycho-Spiritual Training, has been a part of Lafayette for 20 years. This California State-Approved Post-Secondary Institute offers classes in hypnotherapy, Reiki, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) and Energy Therapy. It also provides the community with healing services at an affordable price, through a low-fee clinic staffed by certified professionals performing 6-month internships.
- Looking for a special book at a bargain price? The Friends of the Lafayette Library run **The Book Room**, in operation at the Lafayette Community Center since 1985. You can spend an enjoyable time browsing and also help the Library by buying used hard cover and paperback books on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 9am to noon.

Please let us know about any other "secrets" we've missed. Email your suggestions to **Lafay1968@aol.com**, and look for additional "secrets" in future issues of **Vistas**.

## CITY DIRECTORY

Leave your Council Members a message!

**Call 284-1968**

### Council Members

|                 |                       |            |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Jay Strauss     | <b>Mayor</b>          | <b>270</b> |
| Ivor Samson     | <b>Vice Mayor</b>     | <b>272</b> |
| Carol Federighi | <b>Council Member</b> | <b>273</b> |
| Erling Horn     | <b>Council Member</b> | <b>271</b> |
| Don Tatzin      | <b>Council Member</b> | <b>274</b> |

New City Council Members were seated 11/22/99

For messages to **all** Council Members: **907**

### Administration

|                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>General Reception and</b>       | <b>284-1968</b>      |
| <b>Steven Falk, City Manager</b>   | <b>Fax: 284-3169</b> |
| Tracy Robinson, Admin. Srv. Dir.   | <b>299-3227</b>      |
| Gonzalo Silva, Financial Srv. Mgr. | <b>299-3213</b>      |
| Joanne Robbins, City Clerk         | <b>299-3210</b>      |

### Community Development

- **Director**, Craig Ewing **284-1968**
- **Engineering Services** **284-1951**  
Tony Coe, Manager **299-3203**
- **Planning Services** **284-1976**  
Mike Henn, Manager
- **Public Works Services**  
Ron Lefler, Manager **299-3214**  
P.W. Hotline (to report problems) **299-3259**  
If you observe illegal dumping in creeks & storm drains or accidental spills on roads, call Contra Costa Hazardous Materials Division 646-2286.

### Lamorinda School Bus Program

Juliet Shanks, Analyst **299-3216**  
**Or 299-3215**

### Parks and Recreation

**284-2232**  
Jennifer Russell, Director  
Yvonne Ozorio, Senior Services **284-5050**  
Teen Programs **284-5815**

### Police Services

Emergency: 24 Hours **911**  
Police Dispatch: 24 Hours **284-5010**  
Police Business Office: **283-3680**

Anonymous Tipline, Traffic Enforcement,  
Suggestions & LEARN (Laf. Emergency Action  
Response Network), 299-3232 X 2205

### Addresses

**Fax: 284-3169**  
Street Address: **3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. #210**  
Mailing Address: **P.O. Box 1968**  
**Lafayette, CA 94549-1968**  
E-mail: **lafay1968@aol.com**  
Website: **www.ci.lafayette.ca.us**



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